

working with my Senate colleagues to take on other crucial challenges. I will be an active participant in the Social Security debate because we have a duty to the American people to ensure that their Social Security money is protected, not just for the current generation of retirees but for future generations as well. That is why I introduced my version of the Social Security lockbox last week and why I support the innovative idea of secure personal retirement accounts.

This week I will participate in the debate on class action reform in support of the Senator from Iowa, and I am hopeful we will not stop here. In the near future the Senate needs to address the problem of frivolous lawsuits that are driving more and more doctors out of business and robbing so many rural communities of access to the most basic health care.

I will also keep up the fight against Louisiana corruption and cronyism that still costs us jobs back home. As the folks back home know, I have gotten a few scars from this battle in the past but that is OK; I am ready to continue this fight in the Senate because it is a fight about doing right by Louisiana.

I look forward to working with Senator LANDRIEU on key Louisiana projects that will protect and strengthen our Louisiana economy. By working together we will be able to secure the funding needed to preserve our coast, finish the construction of I-49, and protect our State's vital military installations.

Every morning that I wake up at home in Louisiana, I help my wife Wendy get our four children up and ready for school and for life. Then I view what flows naturally from that. I look for new ideas and innovative avenues to improve the lives of every child in Louisiana. And now in doing so I look for new ways to work with every Member of this great body to build that brighter future.

Mr. President, I thank you and I yield the floor.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I say briefly to the junior Senator from Louisiana, thank you for a marvelous opportunity to hear your first policy speech in the Senate. On behalf of all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we welcome you here, and it is a pleasure to listen to your priorities not only for Louisiana but for the Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Chair. I rise to say a few words to congratulate my colleague, a gentleman I have known for many years and so many in Louisiana and around the Nation have come to admire and respect for his energy and commitment. I can only say the only disappointment in his maiden speech is that he did not call for the Mardi Gras to be a national holiday. The two of us are going to join forces and continue to work on that. I think

most of our colleagues would readily sign that resolution, so we will see.

But let me in seriousness thank him for joining the effort and putting his shoulder to the wheel to lower prescription drug costs for the people of Louisiana and our Nation. There are many critically important and urgent issues before the Congress but that ranks among the top. I believe his expertise in that area is going to be called on often in the next few months as this debate continues.

Also, I would need to mention that I thank him for his efforts in mentioning and fighting for, both in his time in the House and the Louisiana Legislature, the issue of coastal erosion. I see our good friend, the Senator from Arkansas, in the Chamber, and I was joking with his colleague, Senator LINCOLN, last night, saying if we are not successful in our efforts against coastal erosion, they, too, will have the great benefit of representing a coastal State because Louisiana may not be there if we do not address this issue.

On accountability in education, this Congress has made remarkable progress, and our State, you may not realize but as Senator VITTER knows, is leading the Nation in both accountability and also requirements in those new standards, and on transportation. I look forward to working with him.

He has two excellent committee assignments on Commerce and EPA. He will follow in the great footsteps of Senator John Breaux who served so ably on the Committee on Commerce in the area of fisheries as well as coastal issues on that committee, and on Transportation.

So I say to Senator VITTER, welcome to the Senate. Your energy, your enthusiasm, and your vision are going to mean a great deal to strengthen this already august body. Thank you and God bless you in your term.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### CLASS ACTION FAIRNESS ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 5, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5) to amend procedures that apply to consideration of interstate class actions to assure fairer outcomes for class members and defendants, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Durbin (Modified) Amendment No. 3, to preserve State court procedures for handling class actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the pending amendment is set aside and the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. PRYOR, is recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: We are proceeding now to go to the class action bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. SPECTER. And the next order of business is the Pryor amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. SPECTER. I see the Senator from Arkansas on the floor, so I will yield the floor.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 5

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMHAM). The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. PRYOR], for himself, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. BINGAMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 5.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To exempt class action lawsuits brought by the attorney general of any State from the modified civil procedures required by this Act)

On page 5, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

“(1) ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The term ‘attorney general’ means the chief legal officer of a State.

On page 5, line 3, strike “(1)” and insert “(2)”.

On page 5, line 5, strike “(2)” and insert “(3)”.

On page 5, line 12, strike the period at the end and insert the following: “, but does not include any civil action brought by, or on behalf of, any attorney general.”.

On page 5, line 13, strike “(3)” and insert “(4)”.

On page 5, line 17, strike “(4)” and insert “(5)”.

On page 5, line 21, strike “(5)” and insert “(6)”.

On page 6, line 1, strike “(6)” and insert “(7)”.

On page 6, between lines 5 and 6, insert the following:

“(8) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

On page 14, strike lines 20 and 21, and insert the following:

(1) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following:

“(e) As used in this section—

“(1) the term ‘attorney general’ means the chief legal officer of a State; and

“(2) the term ‘State’ means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.”; and

On page 15, line 7, insert “, but does not include any civil action brought by, or on behalf of, any attorney general” before the semicolon at the end.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment to S. 5, the Class